

**DEER HERD UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN**  
**Deer Herd Unit #4**  
**(Morgan-South Rich)**  
**April 2006**

**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

**Morgan, Rich, Summit and Weber counties** - Boundary begins at the junction of I-80 and I-84 near Echo, Utah; east on I-80 to the Utah-Wyoming state line; north along this state line to SR-16; north on SR-16 to SR-39 near Woodruff; west along SR-39 to SR-167 (Trappers Loop road); south on SR-167 to SR-30 at Mountain Green; west on SR-30 to I-84; east on I-84 to I-80.

**LAND OWNERSHIP**

**RANGE AREA AND APPROXIMATE OWNERSHIP**

2006	Yearlong range		Summer Range		Winter Range	
Ownership	Area (acres)	%	Area (acres)	%	Area (acres)	%
Forest Service	0	0%	35429	9%	3217	2%
Bureau of Land Management	8142	19%	4695	1%	15803	9%
Utah State Institutional Trust Lands	701	2%	5876	2%	4967	3%
Native American Trust Lands	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Private	34386	79%	322364	86%	133812	80%
Department of Defense	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
USFWS Refuge	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
National Parks	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Utah State Parks	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources	37	0%	6084	2%	11322	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43266</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>374448</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>169121</b>	<b>100%</b>

**UNIT MANAGEMENT GOALS**

To manage the deer population at levels consistent with available habitat but below carrying capacity, and to maintain a high buck:doe ratio. Actively work and cooperate with private landowners in the rehabilitation and/or acquisition of critical winter range and other range improvement projects as opportunity permits.

**POPULATION MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

- Target Winter Herd Size - The population objective has been reduced from 12,500 to 12,000 wintering deer in 2006 to accommodate the permanent loss of about 4% of the unit's winter range and 2.5% loss of summer range since 2001. This population objective remains for both the short-term (5-year life of this plan) and long term, barring significant changes in range conditions.

- < Herd Composition – Maintain a three-year average post-season classification at a minimum of 15 bucks per 100 does counted.

#### **Unit 4**

1994-2005 Objective: 10,750  
 2003 Objective: 12,500  
 2006-2011 Objective: 12,000  
 Change since 2003: -500 (due to permanent loss of 4% of winter range)

### **POPULATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

#### **Monitoring**

- < Population Size - Utilize checking station data, field collection of harvest data, post season and spring classification counts and range ride data in a computer model to estimate the winter population.
- < Harvest Strategy - Harvest strategies may include any or all of the following; buck only hunts, limited either sex permits, antlerless permits and access management - to provide increased security for big game.

#### **Limiting Factors (May prevent achieving management objectives)**

- < Crop Depredation - All depredation problems will be addressed as dictated by Utah Code and Division of Wildlife Resources policy.
- < Habitat - Excessive over utilization of available habitat by elk will be addressed. The 2006 post-season winter survey found excessive numbers of elk, greatly exceeding the population objective of the unit. The elk population will be reduced to objective to address this problem.
- < Predation - Cougar populations will be managed at levels consistent with the deer population as determined by the management objective. Cougar permits will be authorized as determined by their population and depredation incidents. Animal Damage Control (Wildlife Services) will be utilized when livestock depredation occurs. Wildlife Services, livestock operator or bear permittee according to current rules and regulations may handle bear predation on livestock. Harvest permits will be authorized for cougar and bear according to the populations as determined by the DWR.

### **HABITAT MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

- < To maintain, enhance and protect all big game habitat within the unit to sustain a healthy population of deer as stated in the population objective.
- < Improve critical winter range habitat. Cooperate with private landowners and public land managers to improve 1,000 acres of critical winter habitat each year.
- < Provide big game escape cover/security by implementing access management where warranted.

#### **Condition of deer winter range on Unit 4, as indicated by DWR range trend surveys.**

Year	Mean DCI	Classification	Unit-specific	Unit-specific	Unit-specific
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	score for Unit		DCI score range: Poor	DCI score range: Fair	DCI score range: Good
1996	52	Fair	27 to 40	41 to 55	56 to 71
2001	62	Fair			

### **HABITAT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

- < The Division of Wildlife Resources range trend survey crew will continue to monitor range conditions on a five to six year rotational basis as presently scheduled.
- < Cooperation and open working relationship with government agencies, private landowners/operators and local entities will be actively pursued to address land use planning and all habitat related issues for the Morgan-South Rich unit. Range improvement projects will be considered and proposed for the benefit of all users of the rangelands.
- < Public access to the Division of Wildlife Resources Henefer-Echo Wildlife Management Area (WMA) will be by horseback or foot only to reduce harassment and to encourage big game to remain on the area and to reduce depredation on adjacent private agricultural land.
- < Identify critical areas. Critical deer winter range starts at Cottonwood Canyon (southeast of Browning Arms in Morgan County) and follows the foothills all the way to Lost Creek dam; Cedar Canyon to Heiners Canyon in Summit county. Murphy Ridge to Woodruff Creek just below Woodruff Creek Reservoir in Rich County; and the south slopes from Magpie Canyon around to Bennett Creek in Weber County.
- < Acquisition needs (easements, leases, trades, purchases): Additional winter range needs to be purchased, leased or protected as it becomes available.

### **PERMANENT RANGE TREND SUMMARIES** (Added 2001)

#### **Unit 4, Morgan South Rich**

There are 17 permanent range trend study sites in the Morgan-South Rich management unit. All but two of the transects were read in 1990 and again in 1996 and 2001. Big Hollow and Causey Dam were the only two sites that were not read in 1996, and will be discontinued from the trend study list.

All sites read in 1996 indicated stable to improving soil trends and all but two show stable to improving browse trends. The most notable problem of the unit is the poor condition and composition of the herbaceous under stories. Most sites have under stories dominated by annual grasses and weedy undesirable forbs. Due to the rocky nature of many sites in association with southern aspects, higher winter soil temperatures give competitive advantage to the winter annuals over the perennial native grasses, especially when spring grazing is permitted. Overall, desirable grasses and forbs are in a stable to poor condition although the quantity is up slightly on several sites. The 2001 survey indicated an improving trend on most sites probably due to lower winter utilization from lower overall deer populations. However, high elk use seems to be a continuing problem on some critical winter range areas.

Approximately 3,500 acres of winter range burned on the Henefer-Echo Wildlife Management Area in 1999 and was subsequently reseeded. The reseeding appears to be very successful, and due to the mild winters since the burn, deer use has been moderate but elk use has been high. High winter use by elk is impacting the recovery

Draft 03/09/2006

of the range treatments. Another fire burned about 600 acres of winter range on private land adjacent to the town of Echo, Summit County. High numbers of elk on critical winter ranges appears to have a significant impact on deer range and deer survival.

**Duration of Plan**

This unit management plan was approved by the Wildlife Board on \_\_\_\_\_ and will be in effect for five years from that date, or until amended.